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ABSTRACT

This booklet offers guidelines on how to set up school-employer partnerships based on how others have planned, organized, operated, promoted, and funded their programs. This document describes the following strategies that work in school-to-work transition: (1) developing and maintaining partnerships; (2) planning; (3) learning; (4) anticipating and planning for problems; (5) funding; and (6) promotion to keep partnerships intact. Descriptions of seven successful high school and three post-high school programs are followed by 16 other sources of helpful information. (NLA)

School-to-Work Connections: Formulas for Success

U.S. Department of Labor
Lynn Martin, Secretary

Employment and Training Administration
Roberts T. Jones,
Assistant Secretary for Employment
and Training
1992

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SCHOOL-TO-WORK CONNECTIONS: FORMULAS FOR SUCCESS

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Office of Work–Based Learning

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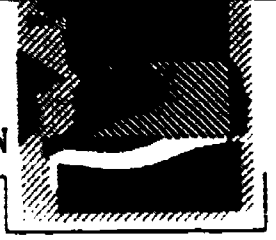


SEEKING SUCCESS

Learning What Works, What Doesn't

Two things have to happen in America, and they have to happen soon.

One is that we must educate our young people more effectively. We must design school experiences that are so relevant, interesting and personally rewarding that students stay in school, stay engaged, and continue to learn.

The other is that we must produce many more qualified workers. In particular, we need people who have the skills to function effectively within increasingly sophisticated employment situations.

These have long been important national issues. Now, however, they have become urgent national priorities. But for the right things to happen, employers and educators must collaborate in ways they've never done before, since for both of these sectors — and indeed, for all of society — so much is at stake.

It is to meet this dual purpose that the concept of School-to-Work Partnerships has evolved.

The School-to-Work movement has actually been under way for several decades. In fact, in the past 10 years it has grown dramatically, with hundreds of active educator-employer partnerships in place throughout the nation.

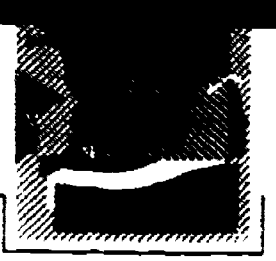
But even at that, things are only just getting started. Although so many programs are in place, we have yet to see a solid nationwide system.

To encourage more partnerships, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor, has funded numerous programs and studies. One recent study, performed by CSR, Incorporated of Washington D.C., examined a number of the more successful School-to-Work partnerships throughout the country to determine which factors contribute most directly to their effectiveness.

This booklet represents the findings of that effort. It does not attempt to set forth a model program. Rather, it offers guidelines on how to go about setting up school-employer partnerships based on how others have planned, organized, operated, promoted and funded their programs. The intention is to share information about strategies that work.

The programs upon which this report is based are highly diversified in terms of participants, training designs, type and size of populations served and geographic distribution. All of them have been in operation at least two years; all have generated outcomes that confirm their validity.

A summary listing of these successful programs is included as the final chapter of this booklet.



PARTNERSHIPS

Developing Them, Maintaining Them

Start a School-to-Work partnership in your community...and good things happen!

Teachers gain access to real-world learning resources and state-of-the-art vocational expertise. Employers are given a say in what is being taught in school and gain direct access to new, more qualified employees. More students tend to complete school as lessons become more interesting — more directly *relevant* — to them. And the community begins to see a reduction in social problems as school drop-out rates go down and employment increases.

In short, when public and private-sector partners combine their respective resources, skills and self-interests to provide a better, more relevant educational experience for young people, *everyone* gains.

Partnerships are generally formed at the community level, usually around a single school district.

Employers contribute job-related criteria for inclusion in classroom curriculum. They provide on-the-job training, tours, presentations, practice job interviews...funding, mentors, supervisors, equipment, supplies... community contacts... and of course — part-time and permanent jobs at non-subsidized wages.

Educator partners deliver instruction, provide scheduling and program development expertise, facilities, logistical support and limited funding. Often they perform the necessary accounting, record-keeping and project oversight functions.

Other local partners — including city and county governments, family assistance organizations, chambers of commerce, labor, trade and professional associations — broaden the resource base considerably and draw public attention to partnership activities and objectives. Often they function as program facilitators or "brokers;" their negotiating role is most helpful in dealing with inevitable "turf" problems.

But as obviously beneficial as such collaborations are — in truth they are challenging and, at times, rather trying undertakings. The assumption is that totally separate sectors of society, driven by wholly different orientations and motivations, will interact smoothly, effectively. And this, as any sociologist knows, is expecting the near impossible.

Still, so much has been tried — and much good has come of it. A great deal has been learned about what does, and doesn't, work. These insights increase the likelihood of success for new partnerships, their partner participants and, most assuredly, their many young benefactors.

Time, Effort and Commitment

Partnerships do not occur magically. Rather, they require considerable time, effort and commitment. Here are a number of "Keys For Success" that new partnerships should consider:

1 Partners should develop a clear, *shared* vision of intended outcomes and should be particularly sensitive to one another's individual objectives.

Before anything happens, there must be -- as a result of careful, thorough negotiation — a genuine understanding among partners regarding expected outcomes. These expectations should, in fact, be written down, formalized.

When developing these objectives — it is important that the short- and long-term needs of each participating partner be served. Programs that focus on disadvantaged youth, for example, also help schools maintain steady attendance levels, aid employers in meeting affirmative action goals, and help community service organizations achieve greater efficiencies with their always-too-limited resources.

2 Educators should adopt a private sector industry perspective.

This is a very critical point. Evidence clearly indicates that the educational partners in most successful programs tend to develop what may be termed a "private sector perspective," that emphasizes performance. They readily accept their role as the main service-providing player on the partnership team — with responsibility for carrying out learning mandates *established by the partnership*. They do not assume unilateral control. They do show a readiness to deal with accountability issues and an inclination to negotiate and seek consensus when problems arise.

One important aspect of this performance perspective is a commitment to *timelines*. In successful programs, schools learned to show a "quick turn" responsiveness when bringing training on-line. This generally means faster decision-making and working within a more flexible calendar than is typically the case in most school systems.

3 Partners must allow for the fact that much time is required for the formulation of stable, lasting partnerships.

Creating strong, durable partnerships inevitably requires a great deal of time. Much of this is *expensive* time because of the significant involvement and commitment required of upper-level managers, especially during the initial implementation phases. Moreover, continuous readjustments will be required throughout the life of the partnership in order to keep it operating efficiently. A good School-to-Work partnership may take as long as seven years to develop to maturity, with occasional up-and-down cycles along the way.

4 Partnerships must foster climates of negotiation and cooperation.

Frequently, partnerships create independent oversight entities or seek the assistance of outside organizations to function as brokers. Such third-party players can foster a win-win intention and reduce the appearance that any one partner is serving a vested interest. Generally, the broker's role is to see that focus is held on two issues: *student needs* and *expected outcomes*. By continually emphasizing needs and outcomes, and by conducting discussions so that compromises and solutions always support the stated mission, partners inevitably broaden their motivations beyond their own self-interests.

5 Developing the partnership around a single school or school system eases the burden of administration.

While partnerships function effectively with an array of *employer* participants, it is advisable to limit *educational* participation to a single school district or system so only one educational entity is the point of contact for all partners. It facilitates communication tremendously, and a single set of books and administrative procedures makes

the one-school-system program far easier to administer than those involving multiple systems. In a case in which one partnership involves 16 school systems, just one administers and operates the program.

6 Employers of *all* sizes and types should be included in School-to-Work partnerships.

Large employers are usually better able to handle the added supervisory responsibilities associated with School-to-Work programs, and generally have more on-the-job training slots to offer. Small businesses, on the other hand, often look to partnerships as a source of part-time workers. And while students might not receive as much structured training within small-employer contexts, they generally gain more varied work experiences. Smaller businesses also gain from partnership involvements by extending their influence and networks.

7 Partnerships must foster open, honest, and frequent communication.

The most successful partnerships are characterized by candid communication at all levels, often on a daily basis, regarding all aspects of program activity and policy. New ideas are routinely encouraged. If an idea is rejected, partners are urged (expected) to rework it, indicate the difficulties with it, and offer suggestions about how it could be made useful. This behavior produces feelings of ownership, contribution and commitment within all collaborating organizations — and the inclination to speak favorably about the program and share credit for its success is reinforced.

8 Commitment must come from the very top levels of participating organizations.

A genuine commitment to the matter of making the school experience more meaningful, more relevant and more effective for all concerned must originate from the top levels of partner organizations... and must grow both horizontally and vertically within all partner organizations if partnerships are to be truly successful. This may be the most important lesson learned from studying established programs.

In the best programs, commitment typically comes from the CEO or at least from a senior vice-president within the employer organizations, from top elected officials on the public sector side, and from the superintendent or president of a school system or community college. Unwavering in its pursuit of the common mission, this top-level commitment confers appropriate status and visibility upon the partnership.

But while decision-making authority rests at upper levels, the responsibility for maintaining contacts, generating support, and making operational decisions must extend vertically and then horizontally within all participating organizations as programs mature. In this way, ownership of the program and pride in the outcomes are experienced at all levels, and commitment is further extended and solidified.

How to Develop A School-to-Work Partnership

- First, set up a committee which includes representatives of all known stakeholder organizations; assign it the task of giving initial form and substance to the partnership.

- Be sure to structure initial meetings as free-flow discussion sessions. Talk about target groups, levels of commitment and involvement, geographic boundaries, and potential resources. See that all representatives join in the discussions.

- Formulate the mission of the Partnership; describe the idea clearly in a page or two. Be explicit about proposed outcomes, including the benefits that would accrue for each partner. Focus on *ends* rather than means.

- Develop a structure for the partnership. Consider such factors as membership criteria (who should represent each stakeholder organization), levels of commitment required, and rules that govern participant interaction and dealings with the public. Establish regular meeting dates and elicit leadership. Draft and sign *Memos Of Understanding* that divide tasks and responsibilities among the participants. Again — *involve all stakeholders*. Resolve to continue the dialogue.

- Establish and maintain such linkage mechanisms as Advisory Committees and Boards of Directors, fund-raising programs, sub-committees, etc. These will help sustain and extend the partnership.

- Write the School-to-Work program. Establish goals, measurable objectives, time frames, resource allocations, expectations, roles and responsibilities, etc. Again, formalize the plan within a document that stakeholders can sign. Be sure to develop program alternatives and consider the probability for success of each. Divide the program into phases with clearly differentiated beginning, midway and mature program activities and objectives.

- Develop an aggressive outreach campaign — speak to community groups; participate in civic events and projects; connect with governmental offices; advertise the program to potential partners and participants. Provide frequent progress updates to media sources, government agencies, target groups, partners, and other interested parties.

- Continually review and revise the program. Include all stakeholders in an ongoing evaluation process and strive for consensus in all decision-making. Check regularly with partners regarding their perceptions of progress. Recognize that revision is necessary for continuing growth.

PLANNING

An Essential Element

Unlike many of the much publicized corporate involvements in education in which businesses just provide money to schools, partners in successful partnerships provide an even more precious resource — *time*.

The time that individuals give to the development and implementation of the partnership is generally uncompensated and given at significant personal sacrifice. Teachers and administrators, for instance, often spend many evenings developing networks, promoting programs, working on placements and providing personalized services to students. There is a direct correlation between the extent of the personal investment each individual within the partnership makes and the continuing success and growth of that partnership.

It is during the initial planning phase that partners come to terms with the tremendous amount of time required for the development of successful programs. Partnerships often take two-to-three years to go from the concept stage to actual start-up; another two-to-three years for implementation, adjustment and revision; and two more years to reach full maturity and generate significant outcomes.

The clarifying process of considering options, forming plans and writing provides the vital forum for airing and resolving the many inevitable differences between partners. It binds all to a common mission and helps to close the gap between private and public-sector perspectives.

Planning *must* be market-driven. It cannot be too conceptual in nature. It must deal directly with the realities of existing circumstances, and must allow for rapid adjustment to changing conditions. And consideration must always be given to the program's effect on partners in terms of profitability and productivity.

Partnerships should always formalize their plans as a way of assuring ownership among all participants and maintaining program continuity as leadership of the organization evolves.

Finally, all plans should definitely include a basis for accountability. Outcomes should be assessed frequently to determine progress in regard to both student and program goals. Publicity objectives should include a commitment to hold the entire program accountable before taxpayers who support a good portion of the costs.

How to Conduct Effective Planning and Policy Formation Processes

- Establish the partnership as an independent entity, separate from its school and business partners. Select a director and establish budget and policy on the basis of program needs. Be sure accountability is directed only to the program's board.

- Establish a single point of external contact for the program — one person authorized to provide "official" public position on all issues and answer requests for information.

- Convene *regular* and *frequent* meetings of planning and administrative groups. Establish and hold to an agenda that sets time parameters and topical issues.

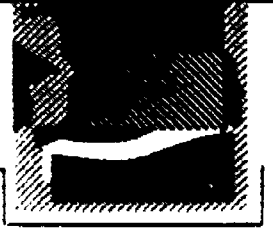
- Be sure representatives of all stakeholder organizations stay actively involved in ongoing planning and revision processes. These people must be authorized and ready to represent the views of their respective partner groups. Moreover, all partners must contribute substantively in order to generate feelings of ownership.

- Develop formal planning documents that all partners sign. These should list activities, timelines, resource needs, responsibilities and assignments. Write a *separate* policy document that lays out the rules under which the program operates; again, have it signed by all participants.

- Write goals and objectives for the partnership that satisfy each stakeholder group; be sure they are reasonable; assess progress toward their accomplishment on a regular basis (e.g., quarterly). Provide definite opportunities for revisions along the way. Incorporate employer needs, wage levels, and skill requirements within the statements of objectives.

- Make sure the structure of the program reinforces the mission to which each partner has agreed. The mission statement should facilitate fulfillment of individual organizational objectives.

- Be sure to maintain the involvement of upper-level management of partner organizations both in policy operation and planning activities — but decentralize decision-making over time so that people at every level contribute and feel ownership for the program's activities and outcomes. The combination of top-down support and decentralized decision-making not only helps maintain priority and commitment, it also guards against the tendency to rely solely on one or two key players.



LEARNING

Where Everything Comes Together

A guiding principle for successful School-to-Work partnerships is that *the more teachers can link their lessons and materials to actual work-site experiences, the more likely it is that programs will be successful.*

The best teaching strategy incorporates actual or highly simulated job-site operations into normal lesson content. Not only does this increase student motivation to stay in school and learn, it also tends to generate higher-level academic and thinking skills.

Along with linking reading, writing and math to employment situations, the types of lessons to be incorporated into the classroom curriculum are: *employability and life-coping skills*, such as oral communication, taking directions, work-place attitudes, resolving conflict, accepting criticism, dealing with alcohol and drugs, quality consciousness...and *occupational skills* of an entry-level, job-specific nature. The first group of skills is of vital importance since it enables students to take direct responsibility for their lives, no matter which career or employment directions they pursue.

Classes conducted in actual or simulated work settings teach students about working under supervision and achieving viable production rates and quality levels. Students see the effect of various peer interaction patterns; the significance of such matters as appropriate dress, attendance and punctuality; and the importance of attaining high levels of academic skills.

The amount of time spent in work settings should vary over the course of a student's progress. First and second year high school students might spend most of their time at school becoming acquainted with job-related perspectives and various occupational skills; juniors and seniors are likely to spend up to 75 percent of their time at actual work sites.

Whatever instructional configuration is employed in the partnership, one rule is strongly advised: Participants *must* attend school and *must* show solid classroom progress in order to qualify for, and continue in, income-generating job situations.

Support services similar to those found in the workplace can lessen barriers that might limit student success. For example, providing transportation vouchers, child care aid or job-required tools and clothing will help to reduce latent alienation some students might feel about staying in school or taking particular employment opportunities.

When young people become involved in adult work contexts, they tend to aspire to adult roles. Their self-esteem increases when they are treated more like adults, with adult problems and responsibilities.

Four Conceptual Models

School-to-Work partnerships, no matter what their configurations, should be guided by these basic principles:

- **High Standards:** School-to-Work transition programs should be designed to allow participants to attain the same academic levels required of other high school graduates.
- **Staying in School:** School-to-Work transition programs should motivate youth to stay in school and become productive citizens.
- **Linking Work and Learning:** School-to-Work transition programs should link classroom curriculum to work-site experience and learning.
- **Employment and Careers:** School-to-Work transition programs should enhance the participants' prospects for immediate employment after leaving school, and for entry on a path that provides significant opportunity for continued education and career development.

When it comes to structuring a new partnership program, the following models — "Tech Prep Plus," "Academy," "Work Site," and "Integrated" — will prove useful.

Tech Prep Plus Model

Also known as "Work-Based 2+2," this model links the final two years of high school with a two-year community college program. The program includes a structured work-site experience which increases progressively from 50 percent of a student's time to nearly full-time in the community college phase.

Students also spend part of each day in high school or community college classes to meet academic requirements. This learning is hands-on, competency-based, and includes theoretical aspects of the occupational focus. Lessons are based on competencies established by participating employers.

Teachers and work-site mentors jointly instruct, create curriculum, discuss, guide and monitor student progress at school and at the work site. Students receive a high school diploma upon completion of the first half of the program, and an Associate degree and certification in their respective fields upon completion of the second half of the program. They are usually paid by employers for time related to work-site learning.

This model can be expanded to include career awareness before the student's junior year and to allow for transition to 4-year colleges following attainment of the Associate degree.

Academy Model

This model features an "academy" which operates as a school-within-a-school at a regular four-year high school. A core group of instructors runs this special-focus program; all lessons and activities are structured around

an occupational theme. The curriculum engenders knowledge, skills, attitudes and a background in theoretical aspects of the occupational area.

Students move through a progressively sequenced schedule centered around hands-on, competency-based learning which involves work assignments in a school-based enterprise (such as a nursery, construction project, restaurant, etc.), in community service programs or in a cooperating industry. In addition to courses required for basic academic credit, students also take specialized high-level courses related to the field, such as environmental science, microbiology or computer science.

The various school-based enterprises often generate profits which are paid out as student wages or funneled back into the academy. Because they are true businesses, these student-run operations produce a great sense of responsibility and pride among participants.

Individual counsel is provided to help students choose any level of occupation within or related to the academy theme. Students who gain high school diplomas or certificates of competency can begin work or continue on to post-secondary programs leading to certification at higher levels within the chosen field.

Academies are generally regulated by an industry-based board, with members representing the occupations being trained for. Board members provide after-school, summer and permanent jobs to students. The Board decides on and applies high standards to the academies.

Work-Site Model

This model moves students out of the traditional school environment where they may not be motivated to succeed — to a specialized industry-based school located at a work site. Students are paid for work-site learning and receive work-based learning curriculum which is hands-on and competency-based. The curriculum covers theoretical aspects of the occupational area and is highly individualized, allowing for "open-entry/ open-exit" based on completion of required academic and work place competencies.

Classes are held on the shop floor or in a separate classroom. Teachers work closely with industry instructors and mentors to jointly create and deliver curriculum and to discuss, guide and monitor student progress in class and on the job. Students receive high school diplomas or certification in various occupational areas upon completion of required competencies.

The fact that students train and work alongside adult workers gives them a sense of maturity and adult responsibility. They also benefit directly from access to state-of-the-art technologies and the chance to up-grade their status in both wages and responsibility.

This design includes counseling, on-site day care, health care and other support services which can be used by students and all employees.

Integrated Model

This school-based model incorporates aspects of each of the other three models in order to present *all* high school students – college and non-college bound — with an opportunity to take high-level competency-based classes that link academic studies with structured work-site learning and experience.

Students in grades 9 and 10 generally take basic required academic classes and prepare for a test of "Initial Mastery" at the end of 10th grade. Individualized career guidance is provided to help them consider occupational interests and career directions.

Students in grades 11 and 12 can choose academically-credited classes which include on-the-job training at a participating work-site. Lessons feature carefully structured content which balances work tasks with explicit learning and provides work-learning experiences.

Students gain high school diplomas as well as certification in various occupational areas upon completion of required competencies. They can enter the work force or go on to any type of post-secondary education and training, including two-year community colleges and four-year colleges.

This program gives all students a greater understanding of the nature of work and of career selection and further education. It works toward the elimination of tracking in schools by instructing youth together based on occupational area (vertical instruction) rather than on the level of the career ladder they are expected to reach (horizontal instruction). It also blurs the boundaries between academic and vocational "tracks" and between college and non-college bound students. It allows them to experience increased interest, motivation, and retention of academic knowledge as a result of context-based instruction.

Ideas for Incorporating Job-Related Elements Into the At-School Experience

- Involve employers in curriculum development and evaluation to insure that content, expectations, examples, and standards reflect actual work-site experiences.
- Create classroom lessons that reflect the demands of the workplace and convey specific on-the-job performance requirements to students.
- Group various competencies into clusters that are associated with job-specific tasks and build manageable, interdisciplinary learning activities around the tasks.
- Emphasize demonstrations, performance modeling and supervisor coaching as the primary means of teaching students.
- Test students in ways that measure such job-specific criteria as performance quality, production rates, safety, customer satisfaction, and manufacturer's specifications.
- *Personalize* instruction as much as possible. Develop individual learning contracts for training; work in and with small teams; provide support services on a basis that resembles "case management."
- Design learning tasks to reflect and reinforce work tasks. Include basic skills and employability skills in the same process.
- Structure lessons so that students *learn-by-doing*. Academic lessons should support work-related learn-by-doing tasks rather than the reverse.
- Express lesson assignments as "Work Orders" reflecting those used in industry.
- Emphasize quality and productivity by applying reasonable pressure on students to perform tasks *correctly* and *on time* — as determined by industry standards.
- Encourage students to *work in teams* to complete learning assignments. Be sure to match experienced students with less-experienced students.
- Use actual work site materials (manuals, installation instructions, safety materials, forms, tools, etc.) as part of routine lesson content.
- Issue supplies, tools and equipment in a way similar to that of the work site. Use a work-based requisition process for issuing materials.
- Organize the training area like the work site for whatever industry you train for. Explicitly discuss the work climate.
- Whenever possible, use real products and "customer relations" between student and customer as part of learning.
- Sustain instruction patterns between instructor and student that mimic those of the work site in terms of formality, expectation, discipline and responsibilities.

PROBLEMS

Anticipate Them, Plan for Them

Expect problems. All of the experience to date indicates that every School-to-Work transition program will encounter numerous difficulties and frustrations along the way. The most successful programs simply anticipate them and develop contingency plans for dealing with them.

The cardinal rule for handling problems is to confront them openly, fairly and creatively. Always bring them before the entire partnership team, even if they are to be assigned to a sub-group or committee for resolution.

Studies have shown these to be the problems most frequently encountered:

Size Inefficiencies

Many start-up partnerships are simply too small to maintain effective programs. In one case, a small rural school system started with few dollars and fewer students, a circumstance which severely limited the capabilities of its program. But once underway, the partnership contracted with other school systems to provide fee services that helped to expand the program. It also worked with employers, local governments, and social service agencies throughout its part of the state to broaden its support and resource base.

This strategy of forming *regional* partner associations has been used effectively to overcome size problems in numerous situations, but some difficulty should be expected when incorporating large numbers of outside or more distant organizations into an existing partnership. Programs are bound to change as new expectations are introduced. Again, memos-of-understanding that confirm expectations and delineate responsibilities among partners are strongly recommended. Clear points of contact must be established within each partner organization.

"Cult of Personality"

Occasionally, programs suffer from a "cult of personality" in which representatives of some of the key participating organizations establish close personal relationships with one another and become very influential within the partnership. When one of these key players leaves, the whole program suffers and often has difficulty surviving.

To avoid the "cult of personality" factor, spread decision-making responsibilities among many people within partner organizations. Indeed, a key characteristic of successful programs is *decentralized* decision-making and broadly-distributed responsibility for maintaining contacts among partner organizations.

Signed memos-of-understanding help to maintain program continuity by extending "ownership" among all partner organizations. Also, public awareness of the partnership — generated through local media exposure — helps to cement external (and ther fore, *internal*) expectations for the program, even though officials in partner organizations may change.

Turf Conflicts

There are "turf battles" even within the most exemplary programs. They occur within individual partner organizations, between partners and occasionally between the partnership and the larger community.

Interestingly, problems seem to occur more often *within individual partner organizations*, especially as programs mature. Internal battles arise over issues such as the use of equipment or facilities...broken or mistreated equipment... scheduling or rotation of students through the work processes...work loads...time demands.

When dealing with problems within partner organizations:

- A strong top-down commitment to the partnership is the best antidote (this, in fact, is critical — the success of the partnership *must* remain a priority concern of the top leaders within each partnership organization).
- Get others to determine in advance how partnership activities will fit into their respective operations, with particular attention to the introduction of students into their work place.
- If possible, establish the program as a separate entity with its own point of contact, its own schedule, its own facility, its own independent cost center.
- Build a strong community constituency for the partnership so it is viewed positively in the larger public arena and thereby contributes favorably to the reputation of each partner organization.

Difficulties *between partner organizations* often arise when introducing the program to new organizations. In one instance, when attempting to recruit contractors and union representatives, one partnership promoted itself as a way to overcome "deficiencies" in their affirmative action hiring practices. Rather than winning the contractors over, this approach generated a defensive reaction regarding their "deficient" status.

Learn enough about potential partners to determine how the partnership complements each organization's mission. Then, push *benefits* rather than problems, and follow with a discussion of the proposal as a win-win opportunity.

When dealing with day-to-day problems among partner organizations:

- Focus on a singular mission for the program; subjugate all other objectives or needs to that mission.
- Draw advice and resources from every partner so that each feels ownership for the program.
- Work for equity in terms of input and output for each participating partner.
- Give credit for success among the partners; offer many frequent "thank yous."
- Recognize and accommodate the needs of each participating partner.
- Establish clear-cut rules about how partners should discuss the program and its problems in public.

Two strategies are useful when dealing with conflict *between the program and outside organizations*. Draw representatives from outside organizations into the

planning process and onto curriculum review committees. And — continue to enhance the program's public image by emphasizing its *success*; publicize its progress, particularly that which complements the objectives of external organizations.

Demographics and Economic Changes

Problems frequently arise because of economic or demographic changes in the region, such as the varying number of students in grade levels from year to year, the growth of non-English speaking populations, and shifts in the local economy from manufacturing to service-based industries.

Usually the best way to deal with any of these factors is to "stand the problem on its head." That is, view the necessity of dealing with such changes as an opportunity for revitalizing the partnership. These challenges often prove quite useful — particularly within mature programs — for not only do they stimulate new ideas, but they force the rekindling of efforts within the partnership.

In established partnerships, when confronted with economic or demographic changes, partners have drawn upon lessons learned during the early development of their partnerships to forge fresh relationships with new partners. Inevitably, this effort resulted in a broadening of their programs to include more students than they had been serving earlier .

FUNDING

Don't Let It Be A Problem

When it comes to funding, successful School-to-Work programs combine resources from both public and private sources . They refuse to allow lack of money to become an excuse for lack of action, and they use seed money to plan and implement start-up activity.

In fact, funding is rarely seen as a major problem. This is not to say that resources are plentiful or easy to find. However, the prevailing attitude within winning programs is that — given the partners involved, the mission and the resources available within the greater community — the job can *always* be accomplished.

The "red tape" associated with various funding sources is often burdensome. Private sector participants seem especially sensitive to this issue and, in some instances, have counseled their co-partners to refuse public money because of it. A more useful solution is that of designating a specific partner, usually the educational partner, to handle the paperwork associated with securing and using government funds. The "paperwork partner" carries the funds on its books and handles accountability requirements.

The matter of finding and allocating resources, however, should be shared by *all* members of the partnership. In this way, successes, and setbacks, too, are shared by everyone. Efforts and contributions of the respective partners are kept roughly equitable *and* are appreciated by other members of the partnership.

Partnerships inevitably benefit from collaborative funding efforts, even when funds are not secured. These help cement relationships and leverage resources that come from within partner organizations. They cause partners to share ideas, clarify their views on the program's mission, and identify alternative sources, should their primary funding targets not pay off.

Collaborative efforts add one additional dimension — partners inevitably learn from rejection and *do not get discouraged*. Routinely, they rework proposals and resubmit ideas to the same or new sources; their persistence is usually rewarded.

It is important to view all contributions — not just the dollars — as resources. While dollars are certainly necessary, successful programs take an entrepreneurial perspective that if the product and effort are worth doing, the resources can be found.

How to Develop Your Resource Base

- Actively pursue and accept all types of resources.
- Think of *time*, *energy* and *commitment* as resources. Often these elements are even more important than dollars.
- Seek seed money to initiate programs and build a record of achievement; promote these to acquire *more* money. Local philanthropic sources and economic development agencies are good sources of seed money.
- Develop a budget that deals realistically with resource needs. Avoid duplicating services and keep all partners informed about the importance of their continuing support.
- Establish an accounting system with one partner as the fiscal agent. By using an established, auditable system — especially within a school district or other public agency — the partnership can avoid tax and accounting problems. A single fiscal agent also allows "mixing and matching" monies as long as a clear audit trail is maintained.
- Don't allow a lack of resources — especially dollars — to become an excuse for inactivity or lack of success.
- Empirical figures on per-participant costs and estimated return-on-investment information is especially effective in recruiting employer partners. Data from established programs suggests that per-participant costs range from $2,500 to $5,000, with most programs falling in the $3,500 range. Businesses respect "bottom-line" cost accounting.
- Use your resource base to leverage additional resources. Set up matching programs with private industry; sell training slots to other educational institutions or employers who are not partners; conduct fund raising drives that include large amounts of regional publicity for contributors and their contributions.

Resources for School-to-Work Programs

- Time, talent, expertise and commitment of partners and volunteers.
- Tools, equipment, materials and supplies for training.
- Facilities, space and utilities for training.
- Work sites and actual work experience opportunities.
- Financial contributions, including seed money and operating capital.
- Referral services from social service and community agencies.
- Supervisory time or time away from production for instruction.
- The experiences and success of past participants.
- In-kind contributions, such as publicity services, teacher salaries, unsubsidized wages, instructional materials, teacher training, planning assistance, etc.

PROMOTION

It Keeps Partnerships Intact

Marketing School-to-Work programs is *not* a luxury. It is, rather, a vital means of keeping the partnership intact by generating an ever-broadening interest for the program and validating its many benefits for clients, partners and the community.

School-to-Work partnerships publicize themselves in order to:

- Attract and retain sufficient numbers of students to ensure program continuity and enable successful outcomes for participants.
- Generate favorable recognition for all partner organizations and attract new organizations to the partnership.
- Assure partners that their time, energies, efforts and resources are well-invested.
- Assure the public-at-large that the partnership is fulfilling its promise, that public and private sector funds are being expended effectively, and that the costs are more than justified by the benefits being gained.

Effective promotion requires using a variety of channels for carrying the message to the program's various constituencies. These should be targeted messages that emphasize outcomes of importance to each respective audience. Message themes should reflect both the goals of the program *and* the individual needs of partner organizations.

Promoting program outcomes is the best way to demonstrate a solid return on investment. Let participants see that their accomplishments are rewarded by better jobs and greater opportunities. Remind employers of the advantage of a highly-skilled work force that is more sensitive to product quality, customer service and satisfaction, fewer errors, higher productivity and greater competitiveness.

The most effective promotional technique of all is personal contact among peers. For potential trainees, current or former students are often the best spokespersons. Similarly, employer partners are the most effective deliverers of the message to prospective business partners. Foremost among recruitment strategies for attracting employers is the credibility imparted by the presence of respected private industry leaders on the program's advisory board.

How to Promote the Program

- Design publicity materials for each segment of your market — students, employers, community organizations and other schools.
- Highlight realistic and important *benefits* for each audience. For example, one of the significant benefits for employers is the ability to recruit and screen entry-level employees.
- Present your message in the language of the target audience. Be mindful of the reading level, style, format and appeal of the message. Be particularly sensitive to the language (English, Spanish), vocabulary, jargon and syntax used by your respective audiences.
- Designate specific time and dollars for marketing activity. Remember, all successful business ventures, including School-to-Work programs, promote their "product."
- Use media sources that have the attention of your audiences.
- Include all partners on your publicity distribution list so they always see what is going out to the various audiences; be sure they are informed in advance of any significant announcements that are released to the media.
- Use the power of personal contact: Invite potential partners to tour the program and talk with staff and students; encourage successful trainees to help promote the program to potential trainees both in and out of school; encourage word-of-mouth promotion among students and partners; get leaders within the partnership to make presentations to other leaders in their respective business and professional circles.
- Emphasize honest, empirically-based outcomes in your publicity including data on school attendance and retention rates, decreasing turnover rate of entry-level students, grade improvement among students and skill acquisition within the general labor pool. Remember, success is the best marketing opportunity.

Promotional Avenues

- Fliers and brochures mailed and distributed.
- Posters in community centers, schools, and public transportation.
- Public service announcements on radio and television.
- Open houses of training facilities and employers.
- Presentations to civic, community, and professional groups.
- Recruitment visits to civic, community, and professional groups.
- Newspaper ads and articles.
- Bumper stickers and T-shirts.
- Exhibits at job fairs, career days and community festivals.
- Program newsletters.
- Involvement in other local organizations and community activities.

Promote These Benefits and Rewards

For Students

- Start over or get a second chance to finish school.
- Earn income while learning.
- Gain actual work experience while going to school.
- Gain access to good jobs.
- Develop potential contacts to broaden employment options.
- Return to school in a non-traditional setting.
- Build self-confidence and experience success at school and work.
- Get personal attention for educational and personal needs and goals.

For Employers

- Obtain an expanded pool of qualified applicants.
- Gain a direct chance to recruit and screen potential employees.
- Evaluate potential employees in work settings prior to hiring.
- Develop a quick, reliable source of skilled labor.
- Meet contractual and legal obligations for affirmative action and equal employment.
- Improve the quality of life and skills in the community.
- Reduce turnover of entry-level employees.
- Influence curriculum development to meet industry requirements.

For Schools

- Reduce dropout rate, improve attendance, increase enrollment.
- Increase student motivation to learn.
- Integrate hands-on, work-related learning in academic instruction.
- Maintain higher outcome standards.
- Provide service to community.
- Serve local employers.
- Expand existing programs.
- Enhance reputation and public image.
- Improve placement/employment rate of graduates.
- Expand resource base.

For Trade, Government and Community Groups

- Increase employability of "forgotten," neglected, disadvantaged or underserved populations.
- Facilitate individual growth and produce good citizens, skilled workers and contributing taxpayers.
- Reduce dependence on long-term public support.
- Enhance community prestige and improve business climate.

SOURCES

Programs That Are Succeeding

After a careful assessment of the many successful School-to-Work partnerships throughout the country, a number of key programs were chosen for review as part of a national study on ways to improve the relevancy and effectiveness of education for the large portion of the U.S. population that is oriented, directly or indirectly, to the nation's job market. They were selected because of their diverse natures, the variety of partners involved, the range of student populations served and the geographic distribution of the programs themselves. All had been operating for a minimum of two years; all were producing desirable outcomes.

The following programs formed the basis of this study...and provided the insights for success which are included in this book.

High-School Level Programs

Los Angeles Adult Regional Occupational and Skills Center, Los Angeles, CA

Operated by Los Angeles Unified School District, Division of Adult and Occupational Education in partnership with several thousand employers and local/state government; serves 400,000 secondary, post-secondary and adult trainees per year. Competency-based training provided in agricultural and environmental studies, business, electronics and computer science, health occupations, home economics, industrial technology.

Louisville Education and Employment Partnership, Louisville, KY

Started in 1988 as joint effort of City of Louisville, Jefferson County Government, Jefferson County Public Schools, Private Industry Council, Chamber of Commerce, Metro United Way; 1,800 to 2,000 annual participants. Objectives — improve student achievement and attendance, reduce dropout rate, increase students in post-secondary education. Local employers provide summer, part-time, and full-time jobs to participants.

Philadelphia High School Academies (PHSA), Philadelphia, PA

PHSA, Inc. (non-profit organization) operates partnership with Philadelphia School District, local business community, American Federation of Teachers, other unions, Philadelphia Committee to Support Public Schools. Six academies — automotive, business, electrical, environmental technology, health, horticultural — operate as schools within a school at 13 high schools serving 1,700 students, grades 9-12, annually.

The Portland Investment (PI), Portland, OR

Formed to combat student dropout and unemployment problems, directed by Leaders Roundtable — ad hoc committee of policy makers

from city and county government, business and industry, public schools, community organizations. PI envisions continuum of education, employment training, and personal support services for prenatal to age 21. Sixteen programs annually serve more than 2,300 youth in middle schools, high schools and alternative schools. Occupational focus is on financial services and health care.

Cooperative Federation for Educational Experiences (COFFEE), Oxford, MA

Involves Oxford City Schools, Digital Equipment Corporation, government agencies, local organizations, other employers, 15 other school systems in western Massachusetts. Specializes in dropout prevention and reconnecting alienated students with education. One hundred students from 18 regional high schools receive vocational training in computer maintenance, word processing, horticulture/agriculture, building/grounds maintenance.

St. Louis Off-Campus Work/Study Program, St. Louis, MO

Initially formed between Ralston Purina Company and voc-ed division of St. Louis Public Schools; now includes five private businesses, American Institute of Banking, City of St. Louis. Goal — increase employability of students through supervised work experience; program offers 100 seniors academic and on-the-job training in banking, business, city government, financial services, customer service at on-site locations.

Student Apprenticeship Linkage Program in Vocational Education, Huntsville, AL

Joint effort of Huntsville Center for Technology, Alabama Department of Education, and local employers links vocational education with industry apprenticeship and training programs. Serves 6-to-12 high school seniors with one year of vocational training, offers pre-apprentice training as machinist, electrician, electronics technician, carpenter, drafter, or plumber while earning wages and gaining job experience.

Post-High School Level Programs

Joint Urban Manpower Program (JUMP), Inc., New York City, NY

Sponsored by private industry and engineering societies, relates to Federal EEO requirements of contracts awarded to private firms by New York State Department of Transportation. Operated by Vocational Foundation, Inc. (non-profit agency), provides 400 hours each of classroom instruction and OJT in construction inspection or drafting. Fifteen-to-25 youth and adults in each training cycle are employees of their respective companies, which reimburse VFI for expenses from their contract funds.

Southeast Institute of Culinary Arts (SICA), St. Augustine, FL

Offered by St. Augustine Technical Center, part of Florida's post-secondary school system; serves 90 students each year. Two-year, compe-

tency-based training includes daily operation of Center's faculty dining room and student cafeteria. Course design guided by advisory boards of local industry representatives and tradespeople. Advisors provide linkages with employers for student job-placement during training and after graduation.

Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW), Renton, WA

Non-profit organization linked with industry, labor and government, trains women for nontraditional jobs in construction and electrical/mechanical trades. Funded by Job Training Partnership Act; serves 50 economically disadvantaged women each five-month course; offered twice a year at Renton Vocational Technical Institute. Addresses multiple skill deficits of participants, uses holistic approach to improve employability and coping skills.

Other Sources of Helpful Information

This list of published data is drawn from ***Youth Apprenticeship, American Style: Report of a Conference***, prepared by "Jobs for the Future," 48 Grove Street, Somerville, MA 02144, 617-628-6661, Richard Kazis, Director, Work Based Learning.

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